

“Phonological/Phonemic Awareness”

CTGE 5534

Beginning Reading and Writing
in Inclusive Classrooms

Instructor – Andrew Fletcher

Phonological Awareness

- Definition – “The ability to attend to and manipulate units of sound in speech (syllables, onsets and rimes, and phonemes) independent of meaning” (Yopp & Yopp, 2009, p. 2).
- Two Dimensions (Yopp & Yopp, 2009, p. 2)
 - Size of the Sound Unit
 - Type of Manipulation
- Size - Graphic – “Phonological Units” (Yopp & Yopp, 2009, p. 3)
- Type of Manipulation is the same as the skills involved – recognizing and generating rhymes, oral blending, oral segmentation, and deletion (elision)
- Think of “Phonological Awareness” as knowledge of words, syllables, and onsets and rimes, in that order.

Phonemic Awareness

- Type of Phonological Awareness
- Definition – “The ability to attend to and manipulate phonemes, the smallest sounds in speech” (Yopp & Yopp, 2009, p. 2).
- Components
 - Phoneme Identification and Categorization (beginning consonants, ending consonants, and medial sounds)
 - Oral Blending
 - Oral Segmentation
 - Phoneme Manipulation (addition, substitution, and deletion)
- Importance
 - The ability to segment words into individual sounds is a prerequisite to learning to read in an alphabetic writing system (e.g., English).
 - The degree to which emergent readers are aware of individual sounds in spoken words can predict future reading success.

General Guidelines for Development

- Use an assessment device to determine which components of phonological/phonemic awareness need to be developed.
- Provide experiences and activities to enhance a child's specific needs.
- Explain the task through direct instruction, adequate modeling, and demonstration.
- Recognize that some languages do not contain the same sounds as English—these sounds may be difficult for English language learners.

Activities for Development

- Rhyming
- Word Beginnings
- Comparing and Contrasting Sounds
- Blending Sounds
- Substituting Sounds
- Segmenting Sounds
- Manipulating Phonemes
- See the Cecil text, pages 74 to 78, for specific detail on these activities as well as the chapter in general for other activity sources.
- See also the Yopp and Yopp article for activities on developing PHONOLOGICAL awareness.

Recommendations for Teaching

- For younger children, do not accompany sound activities with visual cues if the combination seems confusing.
- Make the lessons playful.
- Encourage social interaction.
- Invite children to experiment with language.
- Support children's self-esteem—allow for individual differences and variations.

Other Notes – Sounds That Do Not Occur in Other Languages

Chinese: b ch d dg g oa sh s th
 v z

French: ch ee j ng oo th

Greek: aw ee i oo schwa

Italian: a ar dg h i ng th
 schwa

Japanese: dg f i th oo v schwa

Spanish: dg j sh th z

Native American: l r st (some dialects)

Other Notes – Helping Non-English Speakers - Spanish Speakers

- Assess children's phonemic awareness in Spanish, not English.
- Allow children to do many language activities in Spanish.
- Continue to develop proficiency in Spanish.
- Help children see similarities in the two language systems.
- Use pictures of words that have the same sound in both languages (e.g., *gato*, *cat*).

Other Notes –
Helping Non-English Speakers –
Non-Alphabetic Language Speakers (Arabic, Mandarin, etc.)

- Treat children as English speakers who are struggling to “hear” the sounds in English.
- Speak slowly and use lip, mouth, and tongue training.
- Intensify instruction three to four times a week, building on children’s progress in oral English.

References

- Cecil, N. L. (2007). *Striking a balance: Best practices for early literacy* (3rd ed.). Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway.
- Yopp, H. K., & Yopp, R. H. (2009). Phonological awareness is child's play! *Beyond the Journal: Young Children on the Web*, 1-9.